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Unknown Vancouver Island.

BY ARTHUR INKERSLEY.

B. A., Oxon.



IN the last century although Vancouver Island was roughly surveyed by Captain Cook and more thoroughly by Vancouver, it was never traversed from end to end, or crossed from east to west, until recently.

1894. Two seasons ago an expedition under the Rev. W. W. Bolton started from Cape Commerell, the northernmost point of the island, and penetrated as far as Woss Lake, where the lateness of the season compelled it to turn back.

1896. On the Fourth of July, two years later, a second exploring party, determined to complete the work, landed at Cormorant Isle, on the east coast of Vancouver Island. This second party consisted of five members: the Rev. W. W. Bolton,

leader; Mr. J. W. Laing, formerly president of the Oxford University Athletic Club, provider of the funds; Fleming of Victoria, photographer; Jones of Seattle, guide, and Garver, also of Seattle, cook. From Alert Bay they crossed to the mainland in canoes, and bargained with Itah-go-glass, chief of the Nimpkeesh Indians, to pole them up the rapids of the Nimpkeesh River. After laboriously poling and dragging their canoe up fourteen rapids, Nimpkeesh Lake was reached, and under sail, with a good breeze, was quickly traversed. Camp was pitched at the entrance to the Kla-anch River, up the turbulent waters of which the explorers fought their way for twelve hours. At a place to which they gave the name "Hell's Gate," the rocks on either side of the river rose high and frowning, so that the water boiled and seethed as they rushed through the narrows. For the next two days there was a continual struggle with the rapids of the Kla-anch River, the white men jumping in and out of the boat at the command of the Indian boatmen to haul on the rope attached to its bow.

By the evening of the second day the explorers reached the fork of the Kla-anch with the Koono Koono Sitch, and, wearied by their exertions, were glad to make camp, despite rain, wet ground, and countless gnats and mosquitoes. Next day the

canoe was unloaded and the stores packed upstream, the water being too low to float the laden boat. The whole day was spent in poling and hauling on the rope. Several times log-jams were encountered, and one of these, directly across the stream, had to be cut through with axes.

By noon Woss River was sighted, and then the Indians, though they had contracted to conduct the party to the head of Woss Lake, refused to pole a foot further, saying that the water was too low to permit of further progress. The natives are all disinclined to go into the interior of the island and penetrate the unknown forest. Argument proving useless, they were paid off and provided for their return journey. After they had got well away it was discovered that they had taken with them the entire supply—about thirty pounds—of bacon. It was hopeless to pursue them; so, after a hasty lunch, without meat, and in somewhat depressed spirits, the five trudged off across the highlands toward Woss Lake, carrying all their possessions in packs upon their backs. At first they found it desperately hard work to pack heavy loads through thick un-



POLING UP THE KLA-ANCH RIVER.

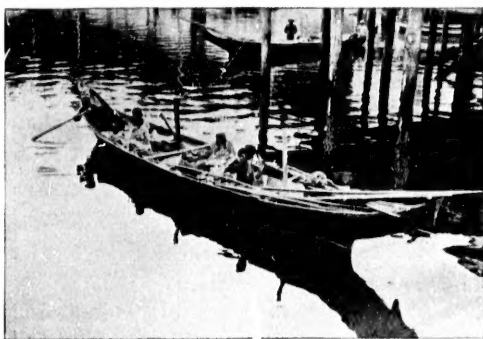
dergrowth, over fallen trees and across half-hidden pools, and after half a day of slow progress they threw themselves and their packs down on the ground and waited for the darkness, that they might sleep and forget their labors. Next morning, awakened by swarms of mosquitoes, they soon found that they had camped within a mile of Woss Lake, which they reached after a toilsome struggle through an area of burnt timber land.

The afternoon was spent in constructing a raft, which by evening was nearly completed. But next morning a gale blew from the head of the Lake, and the raft *Davy Jones* could make no headway. At sundown the wind lulled, and they went aboard, determined, even in pitch darkness, to get to the head of the Lake. For the first two hours the waves washed over the raft, and drenched the men, but they persevered, and, after the swell had gone down, poled along in tolerable comfort. Not daring to get out into the open Lake, they hugged the shore, sounding the points and headlands. At 2:30 A.M. they reached the head of the Lake, lighted a fire on the shingly beach, and lay down just as they were. On awaking next morning a glorious view disclosed itself: to right and left were grand mountains, and before them the Kowse glacier, from which a milky stream ran into the Lake. In this beautiful spot they rested for twenty-four hours after their recent exertions. The photographer got up early in the morning, and was rewarded by catching a good string of beautiful trout which are not only very abundant in this region, but gamier than in most places.

The first exploring party having penetrated to the head of Woss Lake, the real work of the Laing party began here, viz., to traverse the one hundred miles of untrodden interior lying between Woss Lake and Great Central Lake. It being, however, impossible to penetrate so far into unknown country without meat, a plan was formed by which Mr. Bolton and Mr. Jones should endeavor to reach Buttle's Lake, while the rest of the



KOWSE GLACIER.



INDIAN CANOE AT ALERT BAY.

party should make its way to the western coast to get supplies. So they crossed the lake, made one camp, and, shouldering their packs, addressed themselves to the task of crossing the ridge that intervened between them and the coast. After gaining a level of 2,000 feet, Mr. Bolton severely wounded a bear, but failed to secure him. The party was to have broken up on the summit of the dividing range, three going down the Tahsis River to the ocean, and two climbing the high mountain-side, hoping to descend by some gulch to Buttle's Lake. But, handicapped as they were by too heavy packs, it seemed out of the question for the two last to scale the range. So they resolved to journey in company with the others to the ocean, and make a fresh start from Muchalat Sound, an arm of the sea running out of Nootka Sound far up into the interior of the island.

On a hot, clear day the explorers began to descend the slopes, sliding, falling, tumbling down, and availing themselves of the trails left by elk, bear and deer. At evening they camped at the head of the Tahsis Valley, in a lovely glade thickly carpeted with ferns and mosses, and next day found traveling along the valley comparatively easy. For two days the course of the Tahsis River was followed, and at its mouth a deserted Indian ranche was found. With a frail canoe and two paddles captured here, Mr. Bolton and Mr. Jones made their way for thirty miles to Friendly Cove, a settlement of Nootka Indians, where they were welcomed by the storekeeper. A fine canoe and two stalwart Indians were engaged to go up the Tahsis River and bring down the rest of the party. Friendly Cove is interesting as being the spot where Vancouver landed to take over the island from the Spaniards in 1791, and the present chief, McQuinna, is a descendant of the McQuinna whom Vancouver met on friendly terms. To impress the new arrivals, the chief donned a British uniform, presented to him by a post-captain of a man-of-war.

From Friendly Cove the party sailed up the Tlupana Arm,



CAMP ON THE KLASKAN RIVER.

and, again shouldering their packs, started up the bed of a river, which now bears the name of Laing. Steadily climbing for two days they reached the top of the dividing range between the Nootka region and the Connema Peak district. Thence from a height of 4,000 feet they descended down snow slides and over ledges, crossing and recrossing streams, until at length they came to Muchalat Sound and the cannery of the West Coast Packing Company. On the morrow nine days' provisions were packed up to supply the party to Buttle's Lake. Paddling to the head of Muchalat Sound, a broad stream, named East River, was entered, up which the packs were sent in the canoe in the care of Jones, the rest struggling as best they could along the banks, through thick underbrush and devil's club. The progress of the canoe being stopped by a rapid, the entire party pressed on through a forest of hemlock up to a lake 4,300 feet above sea level, and thence to a height of 6,000 feet.

Before leaving Victoria arrangements had been made for relay parties to carry supplies to Buttle's Lake and Great Central Lake. Buttle's Lake was reached on July 30, but a gun fired met with no response. This was discouraging, as provisions were beginning to run short. So, having determined to hurry out as rapidly as possible to the east coast, they went down on a raft to the foot of the lake, and thence proceeded in



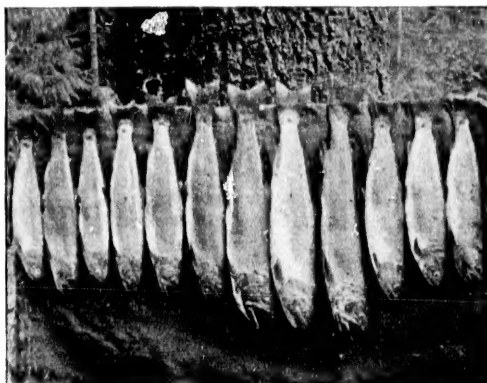
ON THE ROAD TO ALBERTA.

an easterly direction. On August 1 they had eaten almost their last morsel of food, and the first gunshot fired to announce their arrival met with no reply. A second shot, however, was answered by a rifle's sharp crack, and soon the exploring and supply parties were united. It was then ascertained that the supply party had been camped for five days in the same spot, and had made some unsuccessful attempts to get nearer to Buttle's Lake. They returned together to the lake, which they carefully examined, correcting some mistakes as to its shape and extent.

From Buttle's Lake the supply party returned to the east coast, and the main party began again to climb up, till they were more than 7,000 feet above sea level. At this height they were enveloped in a dense fog and were compelled to wait until it cleared away. As soon as it did so they climbed up 500 feet more and gained an altitude of 7,800 feet, the highest attained on the trip. These peaks are named Central Crags, and command a view of Buttle's Lake to the north and of a large body of water—Central Lake—to the south. The descent occupied two days, and on arriving at the shore of Great Central Lake it was found that the second supply party had already been five days in camp. A few pleasant days were spent there in resting, trout fishing, and enjoying the superb scenery. Then Great Central Lake, which is thirty miles long, was traversed in a canoe, the party stopping for a short time when three miles from the head of the lake to examine and photograph some strange hieroglyphics carved upon a rock. Though of large size, no one could make anything out of them.



RAFT ON WOSS LAKE.



A MORNING CATCH OF TROUT.

The photograph has been sent to Professor Boas of the Smithsonian Institute, who is a great authority upon the lore of the Vancouver Island Indians. At the head of the lake the Stamps River was entered, and soon afterward the Alberni River and a lagoon, where the party anchored their canoe and entered the woods. On August 14 they reached Alberni, where some time was spent in examining the gold mines for which that region is rapidly becoming famous.

From Alberni a journey of fifty-six miles took them to Nanaimo, whence it is a railroad trip of eighty-four miles to Victoria, the capital of British Columbia. To these distances are to be added 240 miles by steamer to Alert Bay, 200 miles by canoe and raft, and 115 miles on foot, making a total of 695 miles.

In summing up the explorers' impressions of the country traversed, it may be said that it is a mass of mountain-ranges thrown together in the wildest confusion, of glaciers, boulders, snow-capped peaks, rushing streams, and numerous waterfalls. There is not much large or valuable timber, and slate and marble, though abundant, are found in utterly inaccessible spots. But for the hunter and the fisherman Northern and Central Van-

couver Island is a paradise; while for the lover of fine and rugged scenery there is a constant series of delights and surprises in store. Already there is a tendency noticeable among

sportsmen all over the world to seek the comparative solitudes of the extreme western parts of this continent. After a man has hunted in India, Australia, South Africa and the Balkan fastnesses he does not, as of yore, consider himself a true graduate of the college of Nimrod. He pines for the society of the puma and the grizzly, or cannot die content till he has laid low, at least, one lordly buffalo of the fast diminishing herd. Hence, he sets out for the West, and, once having acquired a feeling of association with western wildernesses, he seems to yield to some spell that calls him again, year after year, to the same haunts. The fascination of the forest for the natural man, great everywhere, is evidently greater in these regions. Why it should be is perhaps not so much of a riddle in reality as it looks at first blush. The fact is, these



GRAVEYARD AT ALERT BAY.

regions are fresher, more virginal, more strange, amid their vastness. Hence, they lure and re lure the adventurous explorer, and make him an enthusiastic advertiser of their charms.

A Monarch of the Mist.

"WRITE me," said the Editor, "three hundred and twenty words. I want them to fill up a blank space."

"I saw yesterday," said I, "about three hundred and twenty words worth in Madison Square Garden. You remember, it was the last of a series of cold, wet days, with a Scotch mist, and the pavement seeming to exude ice-water."

"As I passed through the oasis, beautiful even in winter, I lingered for a moment to admire its spouting geyser. I then observed that there was but one person seated on a bench in the park. That person was an old woman past seventy. Around her narrow shoulders was pinned an antique shawl of the vintage of the early twenties, fashioned in imitation of ye ancient camel's hair. On her nose sat iron-rimmed spectacles, rampant. In one hand she grasped an apple, which she occasionally pecked at. In the other she held an evening paper at a goodly distance, so as to focus the type correctly. Beneath

her feet, soggy but non-conducting, was a Sunday newspaper. The old creature's expression was kindly and intelligent. She was absorbed in the news. Around her unprotected head of snow-white hair the steel-cold mist formed an aureole. The shadowy cabmen were flapping in the distance, slapping themselves to keep warm. Naught disturbed her regal calm.

"The geyser spouted merrily with the unequal spurts that constitute its greatest charm and render it the most delightful fountain in the city. I thought of Ruth and Tom Pinch, in 'Martin Chuzzlewit.' They used to meet at the fountain in Temple Court, you remember. Weaving short romances in my mind, I glanced again at the old lady sitting in solitary state."

"Talk about American Royalties and Queens of Holland Dames!" said I to the geyser. "Surely, this is the Queen of Apple Marys."

"Why don't you write it?" said the Editor.



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